

# Texas DO

The Official Publication of the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association

SUMMER 2024



*The White Coat Ceremonies Begin!*

**Monte Mitchell, DO, JD**  
**2024-2025**  
**TOMA President**

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**Texas DOs Reunite  
in Fort Worth**

TOMAs Annual Convention  
connects physicians in person,  
virtually

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**Doctors in Physician  
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**Spotlight: TOMA's New  
President Stresses Service**

Dr. Monte Mitchell combines medical  
and legal expertise



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Monte Mitchell, DO, JD**  
TOMA President

Dear friends and colleagues,

(Welcome and Invitation to all Guests)

You are welcomed visitors; I will ask a question. What is a DO?

Glad you asked.

A DO is one of two types of duly licensed physicians in the State of Texas. Osteopathy is the only truly holistic patient approach, treating the whole patient within their environment and life circumstances. We use a unique whole personal approach to help prevent illness and injury. It is a unique patient-centered approach to listen and partner with patients to help them remain healthy and stay well.

DOs are trying to look beyond your symptoms to understand how lifestyle and environmental factors impact your well-being. We practice medicine according to the latest science and technology, but also consider options to complement pharmaceuticals and surgery.

DOs receive additional training in the musculoskeletal system, your bodies interconnected system of nerves, muscles, and bones. By combining this knowledge with the latest advances in medical technology, we offer patients the most comprehensive care available today.

### TOMA

TOMA is Texas Osteopathic Medical Association. TOMA represents over 1600 osteopathic physicians and trainees across the state. Founded in 1900, it is the oldest statewide association of its kind in the nation. TOMA is strongly committed to fulfilling its mission of improving public health and promoting the philosophy of osteopathic schools of medicine while raising standards in our industry. TOMA does many things well, but it does three things especially well:

1. Professional development. TOMA continues to provide opportunities for continuous learning and growth through seminars, workshops, and networking events. Empowering our members with the latest knowledge and skills ensures that we will deliver the highest quality of care to our patients. TOMA remains resourceful and relevant in this area.
2. Advocacy. TOMA advocates for our profession and the healthcare needs of our patients. In fact, I've been evaluating legislative issues for decades. Doctors are involved in a lot of legislation, bills, and committees. TOMA helps us keep up with the bills considered by the legislature using committees, lobbyists, and newsletters.
3. Community outreach, committee collaboration, and physician wellness. TOMA continually maintains ties with our community. We organize volunteer initiatives and educational programs to promote health awareness and empower individuals to take control of their well-being. Our goal is to improve public health. We will communicate these things using our social media, our website, our magazine, and our email newsletters. TOMA needs our members now to invigorate their involvement.
4. Members and Relationships - Our members must collaborate to overcome the challenges facing our profession. How do we do it? Relationship. We must foster partnerships with other healthcare organizations like



TMA, TXACFP, the medical schools, and Industry stakeholders to drive innovation, improve healthcare delivery, and address systemic issues.

5. And lastly, physician well-being is of utmost importance. We will implement initiatives to support the physical, mental, and emotional health of our members. This includes promoting work-life balance, provide resources for stress management, and advocating for policies that prioritize physician wellness. Physicians must take some time for themselves, find time to prepare yourself, Spiritually, mentally, and physically. I read a study recently on longevity. The study was designed to define the cause of longevity. Was it diet, lifestyle, exercise, genetics or what? They looked at the oldest thriving population on earth. What they found was interesting. The result was a small township in Italy. Given a diet rich in pasta and olive oil, without particularly outstanding exercise programs or genetics, what cause was prominent? Examiners concluded the cause of longevity in this area was relationships and community. Because relationships gave the people of the township a reason for living, a reason to go on, a reason to overcome the obstacles in life.

My pastor recently passed away. Several years before his passing, he wrote a 28-page booklet. He opined how life can be distilled down into those that are performance oriented and those that are relationship oriented. Today, we continually face a choice between performance on one hand and relationship on the other. Our training is totally performance oriented. The problem with the performance-oriented life is that number one it is destined for failure at some point down the line, and number two if we are performance oriented, we always judge others based on their performance as well. This can lead to judgment, criticism, and the end of the relationship.

Whereas, relationship orientation on the other hand is based on love and concern for the other person without performance. Many people have asked me why I am doing this job? My answer is one word. Love. Love is my answer to why.

## My Campaign

My plan and goal as president of TOMA is simple. I am here to serve you. I know what some of you are thinking. No, I'm not going to do your windows, paint your house, or wash your dog. But I can help you if you have practice problems, state board issues, or need a new malpractice carrier. And much more. You are a rural doctor, maybe the only one in the community, we know you may have unique problems and we want to help. We know your world and we understand you and what you need because we are you.

But TOMA also needs you. We need your wisdom, courage, and expertise. We need your time, treasure, and talents. We need to know your heart. What you're passionate about. Tell us. We need your help. We may need your help on the board of trustees. We need your help on our TOMA committees. We need your prayers. Your ideas. Your input. And if you just don't have time to give these. You can always donate your treasure to a fund. There is the white coat fund, general fund, the foundation, etc.

I plan to offer incentives for any donation to TOMA. Mugs, tumblers, polos, t-shirts, bags, and an ultimate gift of a Texas diamond lapel pin for the largest donors. It is the new Texas Star. Go to the online store to see the exciting things available to us to help TOMA and the needs we have before us.

My plan for the year is to visit the major cities one city per month and offer a meal with educational Content (either AOA FP board module or lecture by sponsoring host). I will travel from city to city to gather your input for a better TOMA. I'm here to gather information about what you need, or foresee a future need for your community. I'm here to serve you and make your life and practice better. However, there is a story behind the story.

## My Story

It is my belief; everyone should know a little bit about the person speaking to them. My story begins as I was born to a Scottish father Monte Vaughn Mitchell and a Jewish mother Judith Dworkin. I grew up in Fort Worth. Had a relatively normal life by today's standards. I boxed in the Golden Gloves and played football in high school.

At 18, I became a Christian and a follower of the supreme author of the universe. I went to university, graduate school, and then graduated from University of North Texas TCOM in 1983. I did an internship and surgical residency but all I ever wanted to do was plastic surgery; however, it was not in the cards for me. So, I worked in emergency medicine for over 40 years. I went to law school and seminary and finished a health policy fellowship at Ohio Heritage and New York Institute of Technology in 2013-2014.

In summary, I was always on a quest for truth. I have had good days and bad throughout my career, like everyone else. But during one of the bad days, a renowned TOMA physician reached out with his hand of friendship. I was ready to give up on our profession, dismayed and downcast, despaired and adrift, I was really at a low point.

Then, I was approached by this TOMA physician. He told me, he knew my difficulties and encouraged me to “not give up” because he knew of my love for medicine and my patients and my love for osteopathy. He was right. He brought me back into the fold. Then later after law school, Dr. John McDonald as president of TOMA appointed me to be the TOMA representative to TAPA. A few years later, Dr. Brent Sanderlin appointed me to fill a board position on the TOMA board of trustees and the rest is history.

Today, I stand before you as president of TOMA on a quest for truth but also with a fire in my chest for osteopathic medicine. If it were not for this physician, I can truthfully say, I would not be standing before you today. I challenge you today, just like this physician was “the one” for me, “be the one” for them. “Be the one” for your patients, fellow doctors, students, staff, and as many others as you may encounter. We are uniquely trained for this.

This is what being an osteopathic physician is. Having a relationship and making family out of our patients, colleagues, and careers. Sure, it is the holistic practice of medicine, treating patients within their circumstances, and treating the whole person. But it is more than a practice to make money. It

is becoming part of a huge family and a history of osteopathic medicine. It is love. It is caring about others more than yourself. It is studying into the night, researching your patients problems, staying up all night at the hospital bed, it is listening when you have 10 other patients waiting, it is knowing how to nudge patients in the right direction for healing, it is getting patients to take their medication’s, do the referrals, and doing that lab or x-ray we request. Be their doctor, their family. Be the one. In what other profession will a patient, within 15 minutes of meeting you, allow you to cut on their body, or do surgery on their soul, and open-up to you about their intimate details. Be the one. I challenge you to be the one. Make them your family. Have a relationship with them. It will not only heal your patients, but it will also heal you as well.

### Conclusion

I know that our talk was lengthy, but I just wanted to begin a relationship with you so that maybe just maybe you would begin a relationship with others.

Monte Mitchell, DO  
June 15, 2024  
Fort Worth, Texas – Museum of Science and History

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



**Steve Durham**  
TOMA Executive Director

Dear Distinguished TOMA Members,

Things are moving very fast at TOMA. The healthcare industry is a triumph of modern science with more discoveries every year. Old ideas are being replaced with new ones very rapidly. This is an exciting time to be a physician. You can work for yourself, for a large corporation, in a telehealth capacity, it's an unprecedented environment.

We just completed our 2024 annual convention, and I would like to thank the 2024 TOMA conference planning committee, which was led by Drs Carol Browne and Khadija Kabani. They scooped up the smartest minds from the best places and the presentations shared the knowledge. I'd also like to thank the entire TOMA Staff for making this year's event so successful. Our TOMA meeting planner, Michele Gonzalez, CMP did a terrific job coordinating the event and operations director Lauren Turner, CAE, CMP, was also splendid.

### Chicago: AOA's House of Delegates 2024

In July, I had the pleasure of traveling to Chicago with 25 physician and student members. This annual trip to the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) House of Delegates meeting is worth the effort. In fact, if you want to serve as a delegate and add Chicago to your 2025 travel list, let us know.

Each year, the AOA convenes with more than 1000 people who are DO physicians and medical students and guests. These people are coming from every state, and they shape the future of the osteopathic profession with their work on AOA's policies.

In Chicago, we heard from the AOA leadership and members about the national association's accomplishments over the past year. Their main goal is just like TOMA's, to continue elevating the DO profession. One example involved a story about the NIH. Only three DOs are among the 462 experts sitting for the national advisory councils of the NIH. There were 213 M.D.'s listed by comparison. This fact impacts DO funding for research and residency programs. This funding issue is an important one.

I want to thank the Texas delegation volunteers for spending their time and money to travel to Chicago. I was so impressed by these A-game TOMA veterans and the dedication they provide. Dr. John C. McDonald chaired our Texas delegation again and Dr. Thomas Mohr chaired an AOA committee on education. Meanwhile, Drs Suter, DeLuca, Belland and Verfurth all served on various AOA committees. TOMA's new president, Dr. Monte Mitchell also made the trip, so TOMA was well represented in Chicago.

Our student delegates, who also made the trip, represented the association so well. The future looks bright. I just try to watch and learn from all these wonderful people as they discuss issues and display their superb humanness and high-level intellect.

All in all, there were 151 resolutions considered, including 106 sunset reviews, 45 new submissions, and 135 resolutions adopted. This involved 350+ pages of reading from our delegates and they delivered. We have so many talented and charitable Texas DO's who I'm so very proud to know.



## TOMA's 2024 Membership Drive

Attracting the next generation of osteopathic physicians is a key factor in the future viability of TOMA. With the fast-moving nature of technology and ever evolving expectations — let alone the fact that many physicians are understandably focusing more on work-life balance — we are tasked with finding new ways to attract new physicians while remaining relevant to our existing members.

TOMA works to protect and enhance the osteopathic profession. TOMA produces quality lectures for CME hours. TOMA follows and distributes state licensure requirements. We try to be your ideal partner. So please keep us informed about your world. Write down your thoughts and send them to us at [toma@txosteo.org](mailto:toma@txosteo.org). We benefit from your contributions, input and involvement.

In closing, we sincerely appreciate your support and hope you join our first-ever virtual town hall meeting on August 27 at

12 noon featuring TOMA President, Monte Mitchell, DO, JD. Look for other public appearances with Dr. Mitchell and stay in touch by visiting our social media sites.

I hope you get involved and help us shape the future of TOMA.

Volunteer today at [txosteo.org/volunteer/](https://txosteo.org/volunteer/)!

All My Best to You,

Steve

Steve Durham  
TOMA Executive Director  
[steve@txosteo.org](mailto:steve@txosteo.org)

# WHY JOIN TOMA?

**BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!**

## MEMBER BENEFITS:

- ✓ Earn CME credits and track online
- ✓ Discounted convention and event pricing
- ✓ Quarterly Texas DO Magazine subscription
- ✓ Advocacy for Texas osteopathic physicians
- ✓ Access to the TOMA career center
- ✓ Memberships for all phases of your career

**RENEW NOW!**

[www.txosteo.org](https://www.txosteo.org)



# TOMA NEWS

## 2024 Osteopathic Physicians Gather to Shape AOA Policy

More than 500 osteopathic physicians and medical students gathered in Chicago, July 16-19 for the American Osteopathic Association's annual business meeting and House of Delegates meeting. From thorough resolution debates to discussions on strategic initiatives to grow and elevate the osteopathic profession, the three-day meeting was a productive one. In addition, the AOA installed its 128th President, Teresa Hubka, DO, FACOOG (Dist), FACOG, CS.



**The TOMA "Texas Delegation" arrives for the AOA House of Delegates. Shown here on the floor of the Marriott hotel in Chicago, Illinois. July 20, 2024.**



**TOMA delegation**

Texas was allocated 22 delegates and 3 student delegates in 2024, served by:

- John McDonald, DO (Texas delegation chair)
- Sara Apsley-Ambriz, DO
- Samin Arianpour, OMS
- Mark Baker, DO
- Kris Belland, DO
- Patricia Brock, DO
- Alec Cooper, OMS
- Valerie DeLuca, DO
- Jespreet Deol, OMS
- David Garza, DO
- Quincey Hogue, OMS
- Townes "Tucker" Leigh, DO
- Monte Mitchell, DO, JD
- Tom Mohr, DO
- Yasmin Obeidi, OMS
- Savannah Porter, OMS
- Adam Smith, DO
- Matthew Stokell, DO
- Robert Suter, DO
- Neha Thippana, OMS
- Larry Verfurth, DO



**L to R: TOMA Delegates Kris Belland, DO, Monte Mitchell, DO, JD, TOMA President, Robert Suter, DO, Valerie DeLuca, DO and Steve Durham, TOMA Executive Director.**



**TOMA physician and student delegates**



**The Texas delegation on Thursday night, just before they discuss the 151 AOA resolutions being considered.**

continued on page 12 >>

## How Personalized Patient Care Helps Physicians Achieve Personal Fulfillment

*Reflecting on nearly a decade of building rewarding relationships and addressing complex health issues, all while enjoying a healthy work-life balance*



**Yvette Alvarez, D.O.**

**Physician and Associate Medical Director  
Conviva in Corpus Christi**

As a fresh-faced graduate out of residency in 2015, I embarked on my medical journey with a clear mission: to devote my career to caring for the growing senior population. Almost a decade later, my enthusiasm for this mission has only intensified, thanks to my experiences at Conviva Care Center. Here, I've witnessed a health care model that prioritizes patient care, as well as fosters substantial professional growth and work-life balance for its physicians.

At Conviva Care Center and CenterWell Senior Primary Care, the emphasis on value-based care (VBC) means that every aspect of patient management is geared toward optimizing outcomes. This approach ensures patients receive attentive and comprehensive care, significantly reducing their need for emergency room visits and hospitalizations. Our model hinges on manageable patient loads—typically 10-12 appointments per day—allowing clinicians to develop effective treatment plans and build meaningful relationships with patients over longer appointment times.

Another key component of our operation is the use of a care team—which includes a care navigator, community health worker, licensed clinical social workers and a clinical pharmacist—who support our delivery of holistic care. This alleviates the burden on clinicians and ensures every patient receives the best possible management for their conditions.

Implementing a team approach has significantly boosted the effectiveness of our patient care. For instance, our community health workers make home visits to engage patients who might otherwise remain isolated. They play a crucial role in bringing these individuals back into our care ecosystem, providing essential insights into their living conditions, which in turn informs our treatment strategies.

There are many benefits to a career at Conviva and CenterWell. These advantages resonate with me most:

### **Holistic Health**

We believe in the importance of senior-focused primary care and going above the basics to help seniors remain healthy and thrive as they age. Beyond care, we have activity centers at our clinics that address more than just medical needs—they promote social interaction to combat loneliness, helping enhance the overall well-being of our patients and other community members.

### **Relationships**

Our patients often express profound gratitude for the care they receive, which is deeply rewarding. Since we have longer appointment times (up to 50% more time than typical provider appointments), I'm able to build healthy relationships with patients and get to know them on a personal level, which in turn helps me deliver high-quality care and establish trust with my patients.

### **Preventive Care**

So many components of care here stand out to me, but I've found the Early Detection and Preventive Screening (EDAPS) program exceptionally valuable. By identifying conditions like heart failure, COPD and dementia early, we can intervene more effectively, preventing severe complications and improving long-term outcomes.

### **Balance**

Beyond the professional realm, Conviva has granted me an invaluable gift: balance. The ability to manage my workload effectively means that after a fulfilling day at the clinic, I can return home to spend quality time with my family, unburdened by the demands often faced by medical professionals. This balance is important to me not only for my personal happiness, but also for maintaining my passion for making an impact on the health care of my patients.

### **Growth**

Conviva Care Center, along with CenterWell Senior Primary Care, is part of the nation's largest senior-focused primary care organization, with nearly 300 centers across 15 states and ongoing expansion. This growth provides physicians with plenty of opportunities to advance. My own journey from a lead physician at a Corpus Christi clinic to the Associate Medical Director of the Corpus Christi market is testament to the company's commitment to cultivating leaders from within.

I would encourage physicians looking to make a meaningful impact in geriatric care – while enjoying a supportive, enriching work environment – to take a tour of our centers and talk with our providers to get a better understanding of how we deliver primary care. You'll find that Conviva and CenterWell do a great job of caring for patients while offering physicians the professional satisfaction and personal fulfillment that we need.

**To learn more about careers at Conviva, visit [ConvivaCareers.com](https://www.convivacareers.com), and to learn more about careers offered at our CenterWell locations in Texas, visit [CenterWellCareers.com](https://www.centerwellcareers.com).**



**OMS white coat recipients**



**OMS white coat recipients**

## Future DOs Receive White Coats

This summer, the TOMA Foundation proudly donated more than 600 white coats to the class of 2028 at Texas' three osteopathic medical schools: University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth's Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, the University of the Incarnate Word School of Osteopathic Medicine, and Sam Houston State University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

The white coat is a symbolic, nonverbal way to reaffirm a fundamental belief in a system that society observes. The authority of dress is serious and purposeful, not social, casual, or random. The dress of healers of primitive societies was an important part of the paraphernalia of healing. The uniform should imply a purely professional interest. It must convey to even the most anxious a sense of seriousness and purpose that helps provide reassurance and confidence that his or her complaints will be dealt with competently and seriously.

The TOMA Foundation is proud to present students with this symbol of the trust between doctor and patient, as well as of compassion and the purity of the medical profession's purpose.

The TOMA Foundation serves as the philanthropic heart of the osteopathic medical profession. It supports programs and services that promote osteopathic medicine and enhance patient-centered care through scholarships and grants, along with memorials to students, physicians, and programs. Help continue this important tradition by donating to the TOMA Foundation, [txosteo.org/foundation](http://txosteo.org/foundation).

## AOA's New President Installed at Chicago House of Delegates

Teresa A. Hubka, DO, FACOOG (Dist.), FACOG, CS, was installed as the 128th president of the AOA last week during the AOA's annual House of Delegates meeting in Chicago. She delivered a resounding call to action for excellence during her inauguration speech, setting forth a vision that emphasizes excellence in osteopathic distinction, physician leadership, and solidarity within the osteopathic community.



Dr. Hubka's address underscored the rich heritage and unique philosophy of osteopathic medicine and outlined ambitious initiatives aimed at advancing the future of health care delivery. Her presidency coincides with the 150th anniversary of osteopathic medicine, commemorating when A.T. Still, MD, DO, introduced the profession's fundamental concepts in 1874. Dr. Hubka emphasized that the practice of osteopathic medicine today resulted from one man's vision and that one person can make a difference.

Reflecting on her personal journey and the legacy of her father, a Navy Top Gun turned attorney driven by a relentless pursuit for excellence, Dr. Hubka drew parallels to the perseverance required to practice modern medicine. "[My father's] commitment to excellence in all things inspires me today," she shared, emphasizing the importance of resilience and continuous improvement in medical practice. You can meet Dr. Hubka in person at OMED24 which is scheduled for Sept. 20-22 in San Antonio.

## **TOMA Participates in AOA's Study on Prior Authorization and Gold Card Program**

Health plan prior authorization (PA) requirements have proliferated over the last decade, with patient exposure to PA increasing across nearly all medical service types, sites of care, and drug classes. In addition to generating greater physician burden and operational costs for healthcare providers, PA places patients at risk for harmful outcomes by delaying care or requiring the use of less efficacious therapies. Gold card programs, which offer exemptions to PA requirements to physicians with a track record of quality care and proper documentation, has been considered as a potential solution that would make the PA process more efficient and effective.

To date, 5 states (including Texas) have enacted gold card laws and several payors have voluntarily implemented gold card programs. A recent AOA document summarizes programs that have been implemented across states and evaluates the effectiveness of such programs. Overall, the potential benefit of many gold card programs to date has not come to fruition, largely due to flaws in program design and failure to address fundamental elements of how plans implement PA requirements. Gold card requirements can be a key part of comprehensive PA reform and alleviate administrative burden. However, policy must be shaped in a way that ensures physicians are able to qualify for programs and that regulators are able to appropriately oversee and define key elements of plans' program implementation. Such policy, alongside reforms that ensure PA requirements are clinically appropriate, applied in a parsimonious fashion, and made more efficient for physicians who do not qualify for a particular service, will support improved care delivery, patient outcomes, and physician career satisfaction.

The Texas legislature passed House Bill 3459 in 2021 which requires that health plans regulated by the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI), including health maintenance organization, preferred provider organization, and exclusive provider organization plans, must implement gold card programs to provide exemptions from PA. The law, which went into effect in October 2022 following promulgation of implementing regulation by TDI, is the most comprehensive of state gold card laws passed to date. See more information at both the TOMA and AOA websites.

## **Member News: The Stanton's Close Their Practice After 41 Years**

It is with mixed emotions that we must inform you our practice will be closing in the coming weeks. After serving patients in the DFW Metroplex and surrounding area for over 41 years, we have made the very difficult decision to retire. With that said, our practice will close in Aug 2024. Beginning August 19, 2024, Dr. Tim Ratino and Dr. Tom Ratino will take over care of our patients at 3001 Airport Freeway, Bedford, TX, 76021 (phone: 817-332-6092).

We are ever so grateful for the service you provided our practice for so many years. We wish you the very best.

Sincerely,

J. Michael Stanton, D.O., F.A.O.C.A and Patrick K. Stanton, D.O., F.A.O.C.A





# Texas DOs Reunite in Fort Worth

## TOMA's Annual Convention connects physicians in person, virtually.

Physicians from across Texas gathered in person June 14–16 at the UNT-HSC-TCOM and virtually for the TOMA and the Texas Chapter of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (TXACOF). This year's convention was a hybrid meeting, offering physicians the flexibility to attend in person or from home.

280+ participants attended live or virtually. This group of thought-provoking speakers provided more than 20 hours of continuing medical education credits. One of the main highlights for in-person participants was the ability to reconnect with fellow osteopathic physicians at the original Texas DO medical school. The convention also hosted American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOF) leaders for updates from TOMA and TXACOF's national organizations.

### New Leaders Installed

A highlight of the convention was the installation of Monte Mitchell, DO, JD, a physician from Fort Worth, the new president of TOMA serves through next June 2025.

TXACOF inducted San Antonio family physician and University of the Incarnate Word School of Osteopathic Medicine professor, Sujana Gogu, DO, FAAFP, as its president.

In this issue of Texas DO, Dr. Mitchell's speech is included, which outlines his priorities for his presidency, which includes strengthening relationships with other DO's. He is also advocating on behalf of the association and the profession — specifically related to scope of practice, graduate medical education funding, and osteopathic distinctiveness.



**Monte Mitchell, DO, JD, installed as TOMA's new president.**

## Evening Awards Dinner Honors Physician Volunteers

On June 15, nearly 100 guests gathered for the installation of TOMA President Monte Mitchell, DO, and TXACOFPP President Sujan Gogu, DO. In addition, exceptional physician volunteers who are members of TOMA and TXACOFPP received these 2024 annual awards:

- 2024 Award recipients from the TOMA/TXACOFPP convention
  - o 2024 Resident DO of the Year – Kaleb Starr, DO
  - o 2024 New Physician of the Year – Jordan Sexe, DO
  - o 2024 Meritorious Service Award – Linda Solis, PhD
  - o 2024 Distinguished Service Award – David Garza, DO, MS, M.S.Ed.L, FACOFP, dist.,FAAFP
  - o 2024 Past President’s Award – Damon Schranz, DO, FACOFP, HPF



*Kaleb Starr, DO recipient of 2024 Resident of the Year award.*



*Jordan Sexe, DO, 2024 New Physician of the Year award recipient.*



*Linda Solis, DO, 2024 Meritorious Service Award recipient pictured with Monte Mitchell, DO, JD, newly installed TOMA president.*

continued on page 16 >>



**2024 Past President's Award recipient Damon Schranz, DO with TOMA president Monte Mitchell, DO.**



**2024 Distinguished Service Award recipient David Garza, DO.**



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**Dr. Adam Smith and Dr. Robert Snow sponsored an outstanding Friday reception at the 2024 Annual Conference.**

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*We appreciate our exhibitors making the trip to Fort Worth. Shown here: AstraZeneca, long time TOMA exhibitors.*



*TOMA members enjoying their time back on a medical school campus.*



*The Friday Night reception allowed our TOMA physicians to catch-up.*



*Former TOMA President, Dr. John C. McDonald poses with AOA's President-Elect, Robert G.G. Piccinini, DO, D. FACN (right).*

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**The new Presidents for both TOMA and TXACOFP usher in the year ahead at the Saturday Night President's reception held at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.**



**AOA President-Elect Dr. Robert Piccinini, DO, D. FACN traveled from his home state of Michigan to stand with TOMA and Texas DO's - seen here with TOMA Board member Kris Belland, DO, MPH, MBA.**



**Dr. Thomas Webb delivered an excellent and thoughtful presentation on Human Trafficking.**



**TOMA's Executive Director Steve Durham thanks TCOM and their Dean Frank Fillipeto, DO for supporting the 2024 TOMA/TXACOFP Annual Convention.**

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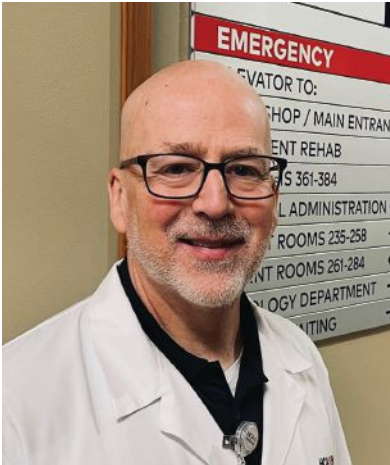


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**Lawrence (Larry) Verfurth, DO, FACOI, MBA, is the Chief Medical Officer at HCA Houston (Conroe) Healthcare.**



**Greg Newman, DO, works in Waco at Baylor, Scott, & White. He has a role in a local research office as a principal investigator for drug and device trials.**



**Dr. Townes "Tucker" Leigh, Jr. is Program Director of the Sam Houston Regional Education Consortium/Huntsville Memorial Hospital Family Medicine Residency program. He is also Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Sports Medicine at SHSU-COM.**

# Doctors In Physician Management

By John Egan

As he was being interviewed for this article one morning in July, Lawrence Verfurth, DO, was keeping tabs on a worrisome situation at the HCA Houston Healthcare Conroe medical center. The local blood bank had exhausted its supply of Type O (negative) blood. Earlier, Dr. Verfurth had alerted hospital staff about the shortage. Now, he was fielding a barrage of text messages about how the hospital was handling the lack of Type O- blood.

"My phone is blowing up," Dr. Verfurth, the hospital's chief medical officer, said at one point.

Blood banks and hospitals often run out of Type O- blood, the most common blood type (O negative) and the universal donor blood type is (O positive) for emergency transfusions. On this day, the absence of Type O- blood was especially critical for the 332-bed Conroe hospital because it operates as a Level II trauma center. On top of that, a patient with Type O- blood was scheduled for open-heart surgery.

"You're kind of in a pickle," Dr. Verfurth said of this day's Type O- shortage.

Dr. Verfurth and the rest of the hospital's staff were able to get out of that pickle, though. They conserved the hospital's remaining units of Type O- blood, hunted for other sources, and leaned on whole blood as a potential substitute. Fortunately, the Type O- shortage didn't force the hospital to shut down any operations or turn away patients.

Welcome to a sliver of a sometimes unpredictable, sometimes adrenaline-pumping day in the life of a DO who practices physician management.

## Serving Many Wants and Needs in Physician Management

On any given day, a professional like Dr. Verfurth who specializes in physician management might be sorting out a blood shortage, refereeing a dispute between a doctor and a patient's family, monitoring a spike in hospital-acquired infections, or laying out a plan for improving patient safety.

Greg Newman, DO, medical director of urgent care at Waco's Baylor Scott & White Hillcrest Marketplace Clinic, says much of his management work involves balancing the "wants and needs" of health care providers and patients while being mindful of how health care providers and patients perceive his employer.

Dr. Newman splits his time between management duties and direct patient care. By contrast, Dr. Verfurth sticks to administrative tasks and doesn't treat patients.

## The "Corporatization" of Medicine

But whether you devote all or part of your time to physician management, you're witnessing changes in this segment of health care.

"I think in the last 10 years, we have seen the independence of physician management probably erode a bit as we've had more and more mergers, and that includes Baylor Scott & White," says Dr. Newman.

He adds: "I don't want to sound like somebody's coming from above and saying, 'Be quiet, do your job, and then get your paycheck at the end of the day.' I think we still have a bit of autonomy and a bit of input, but that seems to have been eroded because of the ... corporatization of medicine over the last 10 years."

Nonetheless, Dr. Townes "Tucker" Leigh, DO, notes that one thing remains constant about physician management — the sharp focus on patients. Dr. Leigh is Program Director of the Sam Houston Regional Education Consortium/Huntsville Memorial Hospital Family Medicine Residency and Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Sports Medicine at SHSU-COM.

"The more things change, the more they stay the same. I believe the main job of the physician manager is to place patient care first and foremost. Slightly behind that is the overall well-being of your colleagues and trainees," says Dr. Leigh. "Ultimately, when everyone has the same goal in mind, success is achievable."

## Keeping up with an Ever-Changing Landscape

Kris Belland, DO, MPH, MBA has achieved tremendous success throughout his career, including various accomplishments in physician management. Among his previous posts are executive officer of South Carolina's Naval Hospital Charleston, and corporate and Chief Medical Officer at Fort Worth-based American Airlines.

Of his time as a medical leader in the Navy, Dr. Belland's bio states: "Kris's strategic leadership in optimizing human performance and implementing safety protocols directly translated into safer operations, reduced mishaps, saved lives, and minimized personnel injuries, showcasing his unwavering commitment to excellence and operational effectiveness."

Dr. Belland, a retired and decorated Navy captain who's a

member of TOMA's Board of Trustees, now puts his aviation and medical know-how to use as president and CEO of Aerospace Medicine Strategic Consultation. The consulting firm says it promotes "the art and science" of aerospace medicine.

Dr. Belland says a typical workday as an aerospace medicine consultant includes administrative duties, strategic planning, meetings, and consultation sessions. He regularly collaborates with stakeholders such as medical professionals, corporate leaders, legal experts, and officials from organizations like the International Civil Aviation Organization.

As with others in his field, Dr. Belland says he must balance "the needs and expectations" of various stakeholders. In addition, he must keep up with "ever-changing health care rules, regulations, and technological advancements."

"On the horizon, I see further integration of AI and data analytics to enhance decision-making," he says, "as well as a continued emphasis on preventive care and wellness programs."

Also on the horizon: More professionals in physician management.

A study released in April 2024 by the American Association for Physician Leadership says the share of U.S. physicians working in practices wholly owned by doctors fell from 60.1% in 2012 to 46.7% in 2022.

"As hospitals and health systems increasingly employ physicians, they need physician leaders who serve as 'interface professionals' who bridge medicine and management ... Physician-led organizations outperform their non-physician-led peers on measures of quality of care, patient experience, and cost of care," the study says.

## The Importance of the Human Touch

While Dr. Belland and fellow management professionals must track developments in health care rules, regulations, and technology, they still need to maintain the human touch. After all, they're dealing with people.

Dr. Verfurth, president-elect of TOMA, says he often finds himself as the middleman between the physician and a patient's family. He fills that role in his current job in Conroe and has done so as chief medical officer for the Christus Good Shepherd Health System in East Texas, and vice president and chief medical officer at Presence Mercy Medical Center in Aurora, Illinois.

"I've been doing it long enough that I've made enough mistakes and learned over time. I know how to talk to families,

continued on page 24 >>

whereas some of my younger partners don't have that social skill yet," says Dr. Verfurth.

Furthermore, he often must act like a parent or a school principal — telling physicians "no" or informing them that they did something wrong.

Meanwhile, at Dr. Newman's clinic in Waco, providers are largely independent, thanks to their wealth of experience in emergency care or urgent care. This doesn't mean, though, that Dr. Newman operates in a hands-off manner. But some physician managers who are working their way up the ranks might be hands-off for a different reason.

"With each subsequent generation, you see physician leadership becoming almost more figurehead and very compartmentalized, rather than [providing] good input for the whole health care delivery system," he says.

In America's massive health care industry, more professionals with business degrees but without "true medical experience" are moving into physician management, says Dr. Newman. This frustrates some physicians who believe they can contribute "very valuable" insights regarding both the medical care and business sides of the industry, he says.

Despite any frustrations felt by physician managers, the job does come with rewards. For instance, Dr. Belland says, these managers typically enjoy career stability and financial incentives. But on the flip side, this line of work can reduce face-to-face time with patients, require navigation of complex regulations, present challenges with management of diverse teams, and lead to burnout, he says.

"There is definitely a sense of having a long-lasting impact on health care delivery," Dr. Leigh says of physician management. "That being said, there are many hard days required to create most small impacts balanced with the satisfaction of seeing

issues needing intervention come full circle to being properly addressed."

Robert E. (Bob) Suter, DO, M.H.A. has experienced his share of those hard days. He's also a newly minted Vice President on the TOMA Board of Directors.

Dr. Suter, a retired Army Reserve brigadier general, is a veteran of physician management. This includes stints as chief of emergency medicine and primary care at Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Georgia, and chief medical officer of U.S. Northern Command's assistance to civilian authorities at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. These days, he's transitioning from the world of health care consulting to the world of academia: He recently agreed to become senior associate dean at SHSU-COM.

Dr. Suter says physician executives "have a special obligation to be patient advocates while also handling issues unique to doctors."

"Some of my proudest success stories come from earlier in my career — turning dysfunctional emergency departments into places that patients and providers wanted to be in, and improving patient access to primary care," he says.

## Maintaining a Professional Image

Aside from the tips on page 25, current and would-be physician managers might benefit from awareness about the image they're projecting. This includes their demeanor and wardrobe.

Dr. Verfurth generally wears a suit and tie to work, and pairs them with his lab coat. Dressing this way commands respect from doctors, patients, and others, he says. That's opposed to regularly putting on scrubs, which might make you "look a little ratty" and unprofessional, says Dr. Verfurth.

"You're always on. They're always watching you. They're always listening.

There's always an audience," he says. Amid that life-in-a-fishbowl existence, you've got to show respect to people — even those you're not fond of — "and be professional at all times," according to Dr. Verfurth.

John Egan is a freelance writer for *Texas DO* magazine and many other publications



**Kris Belland, DO, MPH, MBA is a retired and decorated Navy captain, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He has accrued over 1,800 hours of flight time in various aircraft including the F/A-18, F-14, EA-6B, A-6, and S-3, with 25 combat missions over Iraq.**



**Robert E. (Bob) Suter, DO, MHA, FACOEP-D, BG, US is a retired Army Reserve brigadier general and veteran of physician management. This includes stints as chief of emergency medicine and primary care at Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Georgia. He recently agreed to become senior associate dean at SHSU-COM.**

# Key Expectations in Physician Management

So, against the backdrop of pros and cons, what can a current or future physician manager do to succeed in this line of work? Drs. Belland, Leigh, Newman, Suter, and Verfurth offer the following suggestions:

- **Reflect on your motivation.** Think about where you want to be career-wise five or 10 years down the road. Unless you're entirely sure a totally nonclinical route is right for you, take baby steps toward physician management, Suter suggests.
- **Improve your communication skills.** As a physician manager, you'll be talking with an array of people, such as doctors, nurses, patients, and health care administrators.
- **Cultivate your leadership skills.** These include empathy, decisiveness, and the ability to inspire and motivate. Verfurth stresses that as a physician manager, it's important to figure out your management style.
- **Stay informed.** Keep on top of industry trends, regulations, and technological advancements.
- **Take the initiative.** Seek opportunities to beef up your management skills and assume more responsibility. For instance, you might lead an effort to launch a new clinic or new service line.
- **Keep learning.** Pursue opportunities for professional development and ongoing education. For instance, you might enroll in an MBA program or master's degree program in health care administration to complement your medical education.
- **Personal relations matter most.** Dr. Belland believes in cultivating relationships with colleagues and leaders both within and outside of your workplace. Building strong connections fosters a supportive and collaborative environment, which can lead to increased

job satisfaction, improved team performance, and greater career opportunities. By investing time and effort in developing these relationships, you not only enhance your professional network but also create a foundation of trust and mutual respect.

- **Engage in professional networking.** Going to networking events at the local, state, and national levels can help propel a career in physician management.
- **Strive for work-life balance.** Doing so can help prevent burnout.
- **The ripple effect.** Sometimes a small change can have a significant impact.
- **Get up to speed on nonclinical careers.** If you're new to physician management, the American Association for Physician Leadership offers an online course on nonclinical careers in the medical field. Or consider grabbing a copy of the association's new book, *I Want to Be a Chief Medical Officer: Now What?* Written by Rex Hoffman, MD, chief medical officer at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in Los Angeles

"I am often asked by physicians what I attribute to my success in becoming a chief medical officer," Hoffman says in a news release. "My answer is multifaceted: being inquisitive, doing the necessary research, and being prepared for each step of the process. I have written the book to help others master the components of seeking, interviewing for, and succeeding in the role of the chief medical officer."



Monte Mitchell, DO, JD

## SPOTLIGHT

# TOMA's New President Stresses Service

## Dr. Monte Mitchell combines medical and legal expertise

By Susan Johnston Taylor

In June, TOMA inaugurated Dr. Monte Mitchell, DO, JD as the organization's next president. A fifth generation Texan, Dr. Mitchell brings a wealth of expertise and experience to this role. He attended TCOM for a degree in osteopathic medicine, Texas Wesleyan University School of Law for a law degree, and Southern Methodist University Perkins School of Theology, where he studied ethics.

Board certified in family medicine, emergency medicine, and hospital medicine, Dr. Mitchell has served as a Trustee on the TOMA Board of Trustees, on TOMA's governmental relations committee and bylaws committee, and was chairman of TOMA's ethics committee from 2003 until 2009.

Texas DO talked to Dr. Mitchell about why he became a DO, what challenges osteopathic physicians face and where he sees TOMA headed. The following interview has been edited lightly for clarity and brevity.

**Texas DO:** What inspired you to pursue training osteopathic medicine and the law?

**Monte Mitchell:** I used to have an uncle on my mother's side who was a DO, and we'd go to his house, and he'd play cards with me and ask me questions. I really admired my uncle, so when it came time to decide what to do in life, I said I'd like to be a DO and a physician who would help people and I could be like my uncle.

Later, after becoming a doctor, I wanted to be president of the United States, and one of the best ways to do that was to be a lawyer, so I went to law school.

**Texas DO:** Are there any ways in which your law background and your medical training serve each other?

**Monte Mitchell:** I think that the law degree is great as far as risk management in medicine. It helps a lot to know where the risks are and what you have to document and what you don't. It really helps to mitigate the risk of malpractice.

**Texas DO:** Aside from your uncle, what other doctors impacted you?

**Monte Mitchell:** I was going through a difficult time in my life, and I met



another doctor, Dr. Peterson, who just came to me and said, "I understand that you're having a difficult time. I can see it in your face, and I know that you have a love for being a doctor, a love for your patients and for your practice. I think if you can ride out this difficult time, you will regain what you think you've lost and everything will be okay." And he was right about that and I really appreciated him for encouraging me.

Dr. Eugene Zachary was someone else who brought me back into the fold later after law school. Dr. John McDonald, when he was president of TOMA, he appointed me to be the TOMA representative to TAPA [Texas Alliance for Patient Access], which is an organization that tries to maintain tort reform in Texas. I got to report back to TOMA, what the TAPA people had said.

A few years later Dr. Sanderlin appointed me to fill a board position on the TOMA Board of Trustees, and basically the rest is history. Today I stand before everyone as president of TOMA, because of these doctors that went before me and guided me along my way.

**Texas DO:** What do you think are some of the biggest challenges facing Texas DOs today?

**Monte Mitchell:** We're inundated with constant challenges in our practices. Maintaining our records and to get the best electronic medical records that we can. We're always challenged with insurance companies for payments from Medicare and Medicaid. We're constantly challenged by the number of patients we see and the amount of time we get to spend with them, and what we need to code for correct payments for those patients.

Osteopathy is, to me, the truly holistic patient approach treating the whole patient within their environment and life circumstances. Osteopathy uses a unique whole personal approach to help prevent illness and injury, and it's a unique, patient-centered approach to listen and partner with patients to help them remain healthy and stay well. DOs are trying to look beyond patients' symptoms and understand how lifestyle and environmental factors impact them.

Even though we do offer this most comprehensive care, many times the reimbursement system is an issue. That's why we have to fight with insurance companies and the government to get the reimbursement that we need to survive.

**Texas DO:** What are some of your plans for TOMA's future?

**Monte Mitchell:** TOMA continues to provide opportunities for continuous learning and growth through seminars and workshops and networking events. It empowers their members with the latest knowledge and skills, so that it will ensure that we as physicians can deliver the highest quality of care for our

patients. And so TOMA remains resourceful and relevant in these areas.

TOMA advocates for our profession and the healthcare needs of our patients. I've been evaluating legislative issues for a long time, but many doctors are involved in a lot of legislation and bills and committees, and so TOMA helps us to keep up with the bills considered by the legislature. We do this using committees and lobbyists and newsletters.

The last area is community outreach. TOMA maintains ties with our communities, organizing volunteer initiatives and educational programs to promote health awareness and empower individuals to take control of their wellbeing. We communicate these ideas using social media, our website, our magazine and our email newsletters.

We need our members to step up and to revitalize their involvement. They must collaborate to overcome the challenges facing our profession. We must foster partnerships with other healthcare organizations, the medical schools and other industry stakeholders to foster innovation, improve healthcare delivery and address systemic issues.

Lastly, physician wellbeing is of utmost important importance. We need to implement initiatives to support the physical, mental and emotional health of our members, and this means promoting work life balance, providing resources for stress management and advocating for policies that prioritize physician wellness.

My campaign intends to get out and touch every physician in the state. I know, that may be a grandiose idea, but I want to be a servant. If you have practice problems or state board issues or need a new malpractice insurance carrier, then we can help with that. If you're a rural doctor, then we know your problems are unique, and we can help you. We understand you.





# In Memoriam

## **Rita Arlene Baker (1952-2024)**

FORT WORTH - The spontaneous and generous life of Rita Arlene Galbraith Baker came to a close on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, in the James L. West Center for Dementia Care, Fort Worth, Texas.

Rita was born in Wichita Falls, Texas, on March 5, 1952, as the third of eight siblings. Rita was a 1970 graduate of Wichita Falls High School and a 1974 graduate of North Texas State University (currently known as University of North Texas) with a Bachelor of Science in Speech Therapy. She then completed a Master of Science in Speech Pathology graduating in 1975. Rita cared for many Fort Worth locals as the owner of Bowie Speech and Hearing for over 20 years. After that time, she became a favored team member of the Osteopathic Medical Center of Texas. Upon the closure of the medical center, Rita went on to pursue her love of caregiving through speech pathology at Baylor All Saints until her retirement in 2014.

In 1975, Rita married the love of her life, Dr. Mark Baker, where she followed him to pursue his osteopathic medical career throughout Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. During this time, they welcomed their son into the world around one of Rita's favorite holidays, Mardi Gras 1980. People who knew Rita knew she was happiest in New Orleans, Louisiana. Whether it be Mardi Gras or Jazz Fest Rita loved to pass a good time with friends and family. After returning to their permanent home in Fort Worth, Texas, their family welcomed their precious daughter in 1986. Because of the role of her husband, Mark, Rita was eager to fulfill the spousal roles needed by the American Osteopathic Association.

Rita was first to step in and welcome a new spouse or student, always solidifying hospitality. Many people were stronger because of her endorsement. From 1991-1992 she was President of the Advocates of Texas Osteopathic Medical Association. Then in 2000, Rita served as President of the Advocates of the American Osteopathic Association. And for the remainder of her ability, she lived out her duties as an Advisor for the Student Advocate Association at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine. Many current doctors and friends throughout the Fort Worth community and beyond remember the well-known days of the Baker parties on Pamlico Road made lively by Rita and Dr. Baker. These are cherished memories by all.

Although Rita was a wife, mother of two and beloved speech pathologist, she was greatly known for her pink loving, makeup driven passion for Mary Kay. She was an Independent Consultant for Mary Kay from 1997 until 2011 in which time she earned the rights to a vehicle and the Court of Sales four times over. Rita was ranked number nine out of over one million consultants during her reign. There aren't many ladies who were not dawning with Rita's beauty ability from Texas to Illinois.

Rita held a bond with her siblings and friends alike that was incomparable to most relationships. She was loyal to anyone she connected with and loved all with the strongest compassion. She never met a stranger, and Rita welcomed anyone to the table that needed a seat. All should take a page from the book of Rita Baker as she was a true southern lady who shined for Christ and others no matter the circumstance.

Rita was preceded in death by her parents, Thomas Payne Galbraith and Rita Galbraith Klenke; stepfather, Gerald Klenke; and brothers, Tommy Galbraith and Jimmy Galbraith.

Rita leaves behind her husband of 49 years, Dr. Mark Baker; son, Chris Baker and wife, Ginger Harmon Baker of Fort Worth, Texas; daughter, Dr. Carrie Baker-Royer and husband, Dustin Royer of Sterlington, Louisiana; brothers, Barry Galbraith and wife, Karen of Bedford, Texas, Stan Galbraith and wife, Camille of Duncanville, Texas, and John Galbraith and wife, Susan of Prosper, Texas; sisters, Peggy Wookie and husband, Larry of Gordonville, Texas, and Montie Oakes and husband, George of Austin, Texas; sister-in-law, Kathy Galbraith of Celina, Texas; five loving grandchildren, Harmon, Hadleigh, and Hollis Baker, Jack and Landrie Royer; and a host of nieces, nephews and special friends.

Pallbearers will be nephews, Dallas Baker, Andrew Brown, Chad Carlton, Nathan Galbraith, Bryce Grisoli, Vince Repola, Mason Smith, and Roman Wrobel.

Honorary Pallbearers will be nephews, Michael Adler, Aaron McNeal, Timothy Olson, Justin Sisemore, and Brent Weaver.

The family would like to thank the staff of James L. West and Community Hospice for the exceptional care provided during Rita's final days.

Memorial contributions can be made to the American Osteopathic Foundation or The Alzheimer's Association.

### **Dr. Charles Barton "Bart" Pruitt (1966-2024)**

Dr. Bart Pruitt was a dedicated physician, beloved husband, father, grandfather, and cherished friend, passed away on July 18, 2024, at the age of 58. Born on March 15, 1966, in DeKalb, Texas, Bart was the son of Larry Charles Pruitt and Wanda Loucille Bryant.

Bart spent his formative years in Texas, where he developed a passion for medicine and a deep commitment to serving others. He pursued his undergraduate studies at Austin College in Sherman, Texas, before earning his medical degree from the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine at the University of North Texas Health Science Center. Dr. Bart was known for his compassion, dedication, and excellence in his field, leaving an indelible mark on the countless lives he touched throughout his career.

A long-time active member of Grace Fellowship Ministries in Winnsboro, Bart's faith was a cornerstone of his life. He found joy and solace in his church community, where he shared his love for music by playing guitar and singing. His love for the outdoors led him to many camping trips, where he cherished spending time with family and friends.

On December 21, 1991, Bart married the love of his life, Anna Slaughter, with whom he shared a beautiful journey of

32 years. Their bond was a testament to love, partnership, and mutual respect.

Bart is survived by his devoted wife, Anna Pruitt of Winnsboro; his mother, Wanda Fisher of Mesquite; his father and stepmother, Larry and Jeanita Pruitt of Marshall; his children, Mason Pruitt and his wife, Lydia, Olivia Pruitt of Tyler, and Ross Pruitt of Winnsboro; his sister, Tammy Seabourn and her husband, Todd of Sunnyvale; his stepsister, Jayme Hammontree and her husband, Sam of Marshall; his stepbrothers, John McCullough and his wife, Christie of Commerce, and Jason McCullough and his wife, Kim of Mt. Vernon; and his precious granddaughter, Georgia Jane Pruitt. Bart's family was the pride and joy of his life, and he treasured every moment spent with them.

Dr. Bart Pruitt's legacy is one of love, kindness, and unwavering dedication to his family, friends, and patients. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him, but his spirit will live on in the hearts of those he touched.

A memorial service to celebrate Bart's life will be held at Grace Fellowship Ministries in Winnsboro. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Grace Fellowship Ministries in Bart's honor.

Bart's Life Verse: Micah 6:8 (NKJV) "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God."

### **Dr. Timothy Lawrence Moore (1948-2024)**

Dr. Timothy Moore, fondly known as Tim by his family, "Doc" to friends and patients, went to be with his Heavenly Father on Tuesday, April 30, 2024 at the age of 75. Tim was born on November 3, 1948, at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, and spent most of his childhood in Fort Worth, TX.

At the age of 20, Tim joined the United States Navy, and honorably served his country during the War in Vietnam. Upon his military exit, he was awarded a Bronze Star, Silver Star, and a Purple Heart, for his selfless acts of service.

He attended Texas Christian University for his undergraduate studies and then entered Pharmacy School at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, where he graduated in 1980.

Tim continued his education pursuing a Doctorate in Medicine at the University of North Texas Health Science Center and Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine where he graduated in 1984. Answering a call to serve as a Family Medicine Physician, Tim has helped patients in many different capacities throughout the course of his 39 years of service and experience in Oklahoma.

Throughout his career, he was affiliated with the Integris Baptist Medical Center and Integris Southwest Medical Hospital and was one of the founders of Community Hospital. During the latter part of his career, he partnered with the Department

of Veterans Affairs and assisted veterans with disability assessments until his retirement in 2022.

Tim's true happiness in life was traveling, fishing, hunting and being outside. He loved being with his family and attending church. Tim was known for his jovial sense of humor and sarcasm.

Throughout his life, Tim remained constant in his devout love and service of the Lord. Always remaining faithful, selfless and with a servant's heart, he loved helping and serving others. Tim left a tremendous legacy that will continue to live on

through each of us and he will forever be held close in our hearts each day.

More than any of his earthly accolades, Tim loved his family. He enjoyed the early days of encouraging his children in school, sports, and providing for his family. He received a new gift, when he became a Grandpa and was overcome with joy when he spent time with them. Tim will forever be remembered as a loving father, doting grandfather, a wonderful physician and a great friend.

# CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION



**VIRTUAL**

## PRIMARY CARE UPDATE

*Monday, November 4, 2024, 8:00 am - Wednesday, December 4, 2024, 11:59 pm.  
Earn 20.00 hours, AOA Category 1-A credits.*

The goal of the 2024 Virtual Primary Care Update is to provide primary care providers with the latest in practice guidelines over a wide variety of frequently encountered topics and disease processes. Program participants will then apply the knowledge gained back to their existing rural, suburban or urban practice allowing them to bridge the gap between previous therapies and the current best practices.

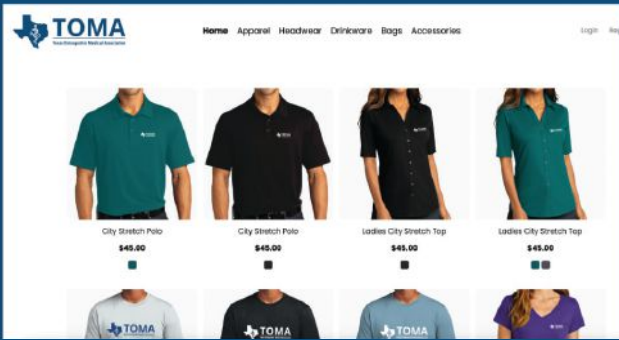


**VIRTUAL**

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